And I did not despise anything in me so much as my self-esteem; I intended to make it impossible and took pleasure in debasing myself. My hatred of all cowardice urged me on. When something within me checked me, I feared it might be fear, and I went ahead, At present I don't give a hang what I am or am not. I don't bother with that.

At La Perouse's. Received by his wife, whom I had not seen in three years.

A moment later, M. T. arrives, Edouard Gide's piano teacher: full of animation, too young, red-headed, quick on the trigger. He knew very well that La Perouse was out, and it was clear that he was not coming to see him. He rang three times like someone who was expected.

Mme La Perouse exclaimed: "Oh! Who's ringing as if he owned the house?"

She went to open the door, and right away, from the hall, in a very loud voice, intended, certainly, for me to hear:

"Oh! how sorry Monsieur La Perouse will be! Actually he is not coming back until seven thirty. He went to play chess with his friend Monsieur Dauphin, as he does every Sunday/'

And, like every Sunday, M. T. seemed to know this very well. I recognized that I was in the way, but Mme La Perouse began to talk of her grandson Pierre, doubtless eager to form my opinion. She talks endlessly about his studies, develops the reasons for taking him out of the ficole Alsacienne,[21] "where he was too easily at the head of the class/*. . . And all the time that she is talking, M. La Perouse's sad words ring in my ears, drowning out his wife's; and I saw again that wonderful figure saying to me, in the same calm voice in which he might have said: "It's a beautiful day": "My wife always lies. As soon as she opens her mouth, I think: Come now! Not a

word of this will be true!"

Late February

Back from La Fl£che.

The mere sight of the grass and the branches, even without leaves, rests me. I have had the keenest pleasure from walking, toward evening, on the uneven streets of the village. . . . Charming garden! How well I should work here, if I were alone!

This big avenue of linden trees inclines me, with Marcel Drouin, to serious conversations. Jeanne Drouin has had the shrubs rearranged;

[21] A very strict Protestant school in Paris, which Andre Gide attended as a boy.